

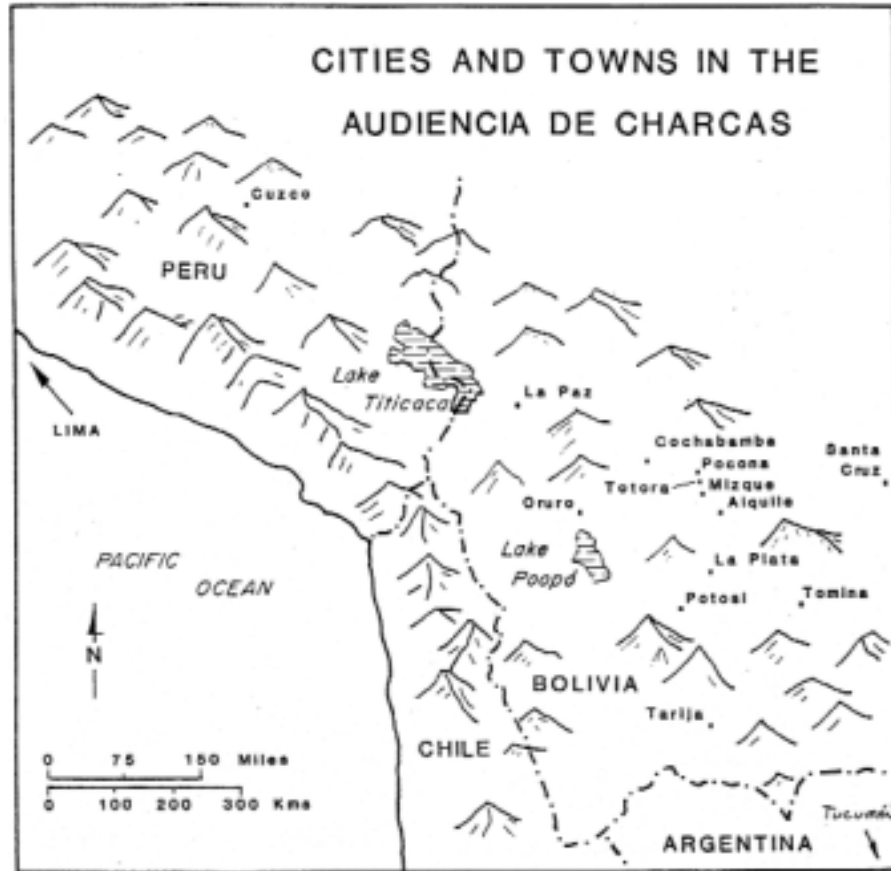
THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN THE EASTERN ANDES: ADAPTATION, AGENCY, AND FUGITIVE ACTION, 1573-1677

In 1545, miners struck silver in what would become one of the richest veins in the entire New World, the near legendary Cerro Rico of Potosí, in the Andean highlands of Peru. This strike prompted swift action on the part of royal authorities. They sought to rearrange existing land and labor systems and to establish new ones to meet the spiraling economic demands. Simultaneously they had to cope with a dramatic, unprecedented drop in the indigenous population which hitherto had supplied needed labor. The crown turned elsewhere, and authorized the exploitation of another, far more distant group of people. Slaves from Africa became an additional, ongoing source of much needed labor in the Andes.

The now classic works of James Lockhart and Frederick Bowser, path-breaking in their examination of a strong African presence in the conquest and early colonization of Peru, serve as an incentive for this article. While the above scholars looked to Lima and the Pacific coast-to-highland economic axis to examine African slavery and its many and complex ramifications,¹ this work extends the examination far beyond these traditionally established regional parameters. Instead, it will focus on the African experience in a little known, and even less studied, frontier region of the eastern Andes.

Specifically, this study will take the reader to the varied ecological jurisdiction or *corregimiento* of Mizque, an area southeast of the Cochabamba valley system in the Audiencia de Charcas (today Bolivia). Soon after conquest, this region became an important agricultural producer, and equally important, a major link in the eastern lowland hinterland of Santa Cruz and highland La Plata-Potosí exchange. The villa of Mizque gained official

¹ James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1531-1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); and Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).



Courtesy of the Cartography Laboratory, North Carolina Central University.

recognition in 1561, if not earlier.² My ongoing research in this region also reveals that the African diaspora,³ propelled by external and internal economic forces, reached far deeper into the eastern slopes and hinterland of Charcas than has been previously recognized. Here, the corregimiento de Mizque (honey in Quechua), assumes center stage. Royal authorities recognized the region's potential early on in spite of its supposed status as a

² Lolita Gutiérrez Brockington, "La dinámica de la historia regional: Mizque y 'la' puente de 1630," in *Historia y Cultura*, vol. 22 (Lima: Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología, e Historia del Peru, Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1994).

³ For a timely, critical appraisal of the five major African diasporas, see Colin Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora" in the American Historical Association Newsletter, "Perspectives," vol. 36, no. 6 (September, 1998) 1, pp. 22-25.

peripheral, isolated “frontier.”⁴ Prominent encomendero families, such as the Paniagua Loaysa clan, had landholdings at least by 1548. Further encouraged by the crown, additional European entrepreneurs moved into Mizque’s more temperate zones to control, indirectly or directly, agricultural production for the increasingly demanding markets of Potosí and the fast-growing La Plata (today Sucre). No doubt anticipating future markets, by the early 1560s royal authorities were strongly urging increased settlement of Mizque in order to counter the economically disruptive incursions by the Chiriguanos. These aggressive Indians, themselves resisting European domination, continued to massacre the outsiders as well as repartimiento Indians (Indians affixed to specific communities) and to attack properties well into the early decades of the seventeenth century, if not beyond.⁵ Further, throughout this period authorities continually ordered prominent encomenderos such as Fernando Cazorla and the aforementioned Gabriel Paniagua Loaysa to form militia and lead campaigns against the Chiriguano.⁶ Also by 1560 Catholic priests were busy attempting to indoctrinate the local Indians. Certainly the astute Viceroy Toledo recognized the region’s economic significance and in 1573 called for additional restrictions on Indian landholding in order to make more room for *chácara* (agricultural holding, often synonymous with hacienda) ownership.⁷

The region’s European population and attendant market activity continued to expand. The Mizque valley system was producing wheat, corn, barley and other grains, all manner of fruits, beans, potatoes, cotton, lumber, cheeses, honey, sugar, thousands of heads of livestock (especially cattle and sheep) and most important, coca and wine.⁸ Yet the indigenous population, like its counterparts throughout the Americas, plummeted. The catastrophic 87% population loss⁹ had left the jurisdiction particularly vulnerable to labor shortages early on, just when the Spaniards were exploring means by which to adapt existing native land and labor systems to meet the rapidly increas-

⁴ For an excellent recent ethnohistorical analysis and reassessment of territoriality and territorial concepts, please see Raimund Von Schramm, “Fronteras y territorialidad. Repartición étnica y política colonizadora en los Charcas (valles de Ayopaya y Mizque)” in *Jahrbuch Für Geschichte. Von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Latein Amerikas*. Band 30, 1993.

⁵ Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, Catálogo Ruck, 1604.111.32, nos. 890, 893, 898; 1604.111.15, nos. 887, 888; 1606, no. 971; and Josep M. Barnadas, *Charcas: Origenes históricos de una sociedad colonial, 1535-1565* (La Paz: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Camposinado, 1973) pp. 470-472.

⁶ Archivo Municipal de Cochabamba, Mizque Collection (hereinafter AMCBA-M), vols. 1591-1598, 1599-1629, 1630-1676.

⁷ AMCBA-M, vol. 1561-1590, exp. 2.

⁸ AMCBA-M, vols. 1591-1598, 1599-1629, 1602, 1629-1676.

⁹ Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, *Indios y tributos en el Alto Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1978) p. 30.

ing market demands. This loss was further magnified by the firmly entrenched Andean characteristic—which had predated the arrival of the Europeans by centuries—that of flight and, more specifically, of migration.¹⁰ Further, after the silver strike in Potosí, coca, the traditional crop long grown in Mizque’s tropical eastern reaches, *los yungas* (as well as in other yungas areas beyond the Lake Titicaca region of La Paz), came into intense demand for reasons related to the new economy. Now, coca allowed the silver miners to endure their demanding toils within the mines.

Thus, with a flourishing mining industry and concurrent voracious highland market for goods produced only at the more temperate levels of the viceroyalty, Mizque’s reduced native labor pool, like those throughout the entire colonial empire, was supplemented with African slaves. This group’s proportionately smaller numbers in relation to the Indian population belie their importance. In terms of labor distribution, while Indian labor at first pertained exclusively to their tribute-paying communities or repartimientos, this restriction became difficult to maintain. Similar to their neighboring counterparts in Cochabamba, as early as 1556 Mizque Indians chose to leave their repartimientos and attach themselves to the privately owned *chácaras* established by the Europeans throughout the jurisdiction. Possibly, a “push-pull” phenomenon worked here. Life in the communities or repartimientos was designed to control and maximize indigenous productivity, best demonstrated in the community accounts of coca and wine production. On the other hand, life in the *chácaras* offered advantages not available in the communities. By law, the *chacarero* was required to provide his *yanacona* (Indian servant) with food, clothing, religious indoctrination, a plot of land (and a day off to work it), and health needs. Thus, in the Andean tradition of “flight” or migration, the *chácaras* could easily attract restless or dissatisfied repartimiento individuals or groups.¹¹

It is at this juncture of native flight and population loss that the Europeans turned to African slavery to supplement the sparse and increasingly unreliable Indian labor pool. African slaves and their descendants would work on

¹⁰ Jeffrey A. Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1573-1700: Compulsory Indian labor in the Andes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985) 125; Ann M. Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco, 1520-1720* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990) pp. 9, 24, 25; also see David M. Pereira Herrera and Donald L. Brockington, eds, *Investigaciones arqueológicas en las tierras tropicales del Departamento de Cochabamba, Bolivia*. Cuadernos de Investigación, Serie Arqueología, no. 9. Instituto de Estudios Antropológicos y Museo Arqueológico. Universidad Mayor de San Simón. Cochabamba. In press.

¹¹ See Brooke Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia: Cochabamba, 1550-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) pp. 83-84; María Ramírez Valverde, transcriber, “Visita a Pocona” in *Historia y Cultura* (Lima, 1970); and AMCBA-M, vol. 1606, f. 2267-2267V and vol. 1561-1590, exp. 13.

the Mizque chácaras and haciendas, not only as domestics, but also as laborers, particularly on the cattle, sugar and wine producing estates. They would also emerge, significantly, in other non-agricultural sectors which I discussed in another work. In that study, as with this present work, I had at my disposal a wide array of notarial documents collected from the Archivo Municipal de Cochabamba, as well as a plethora of documents from the Archivo and Biblioteca Nacional de Sucre, and transcribed documents from the Archivo General de las Indías in Sevilla. These include, among others, parish reports, dowries, last wills and testaments, bills of slave sales, business contracts, court cases, and estate papers.

In fact, it is precisely through a good variety of estate-related documents—*padrones de chacara*, or estate censuses, inventories, wills, tax appraisals, and guardianships—that the African presence on the chácaras clearly surfaces. Take for example, the *padrones de chácaras*. These were conducted yearly by local government officials. From chacara to chacara the officials traveled, with their scribes and their Indian interpreters, asking the same set of questions at each stop. These *padrones* serve as a window through which we can observe a number of characteristics of chacara labor, both Indian and—less discussed in the current Andean literature—African. Not only do the *padrones* reveal an impressive diversity of distant origins of the yanacóna, unexpectedly, “negros” and “mulatos” are listed along with the resident “yanacóna,” a nomenclature until now traditionally assumed to be synonymous with Indian labor.¹²

Further, and perhaps concomitant to the diversity of origins, the outmigration changed over time from predominantly able-bodied males to people of both sexes and all ages. People were constantly on the go. Not only could administrators not keep the Indians restricted to their communities or reducciones, chacareros could not control them on their private estates.¹³ As more is learned, we may even wish to replace or at least redefine the term *huido* (traditionally suggesting a flight away from something). There is an obvious push-pull phenomenon at work here, as well as clear evidence of self-assertion. For all the concerted efforts to tie people to the land, the people would not be tied. In the records I examined, the yanacóna came to Mizque from the farthest reaches of the viceroyalty. They also left in droves.¹⁴

¹² AMCBA-M, vol. 1597-1607, exp. 18.

¹³ AMCBA-M, vol. 1597-1607, exp. 18; and vol. 1605-1607.

¹⁴ These demographic patterns are most clearly represented in the *padrones de chacara* mentioned earlier. While doing archival research in Cochabamba and Sucre, I was generously allowed to photocopy (apart from the many I copied by hand—no laptops then!) a substantial number of these serial documents,

It was into this pre-existing Andean environment of movement-migration-flight that the African slave was introduced. At the onset of this paper, I established that the villa of Mizque had acquired legal recognition by 1561, if not earlier, and that the prominent Paniagua Loaysa family had obtained their Mizque holdings by 1548. The first record of an African presence, however, did not appear until 1573 when Indian cacique don Pedro Arapa listed his extensive land holdings and personal properties, as well as people in his debt. Here he noted one Cristóbal Roldan, mulato, who owed him 29 silver pesos for a colt and stallion. By the 1580s, bills of sale begin to appear.¹⁵ By the 1590s the African presence, slave and free, is visible everywhere. “Negros y mulatos” were listed along with the Indian yanacona in the 1597 padrón of Mizque. At least six chacaras, some in the lowland coca producing areas, others centrally located in the temperate niches of the jurisdiction, claimed the presence of Africans and African descendants often living in family clusters with a mother and a father present and in some cases up to five children. On the large Buena Vista chacara owned by the Paniagua Loaysas, two padrón categories were created—one for the Indians and another for the chacara mulatos, referred to as the “visita de los mulatos.” There were at least sixteen mulatoes, all but one male. They were not identified as slaves.¹⁶ Instead, as I will discuss shortly, they were considered yanacona, a term, as mentioned earlier, usually considered to be synonymous *only* with Indians.

Significantly, these padrones under discussion also reveal that like their Indian counterparts, the African-related groups were also choosing “flight.” We have, for example, Antón Negro, whose son Antón, age 25, “went” to Cuzco, or Martín Chare Mulato natural “huido” from a chacara one year, only to reappear on the lists the following year, or mulato Domingo Garro and wife, present on the same chacara one year, but no longer listed the next year. We have Barbola mulata and her three children moving from one chacara to another of different ownership in a two year period. Further, I am convinced there are a number of “hidden” Africans in these padrones, not identified by ancestry, but who possess surnames that have neither a European nor a native resonance, such as Tongo, Llororo, and Gororo, to name a few.¹⁷ No doubt the many remaining padrones I have yet to examine will reveal more African participation on the chacaras and elsewhere.

dating from the late 1500s into the mid-1700s. They yield a wealth of information including age, gender, familial status, place of origins, legal status and ethnicity of each yanacona attached to the chacara. This data will be an entire chapter in my monograph now in progress.

¹⁵ AMCBA-M, vol. 1561-1590, exp. 3, and exp. 17.

¹⁶ AMCBA-M, vol. 1597-1607, exp. 18.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Fortunately, a number of cross references on *chácara* labor underscore the discussion at hand. Several hacendados and chacareros also left last wills and testaments, many of which called for detailed inventories of all properties, including, of course, their haciendas and *chácaras*. Here more data emerge on African and African-descendant labor, slave and free. Joan Alvarez Menéndez's will of 1597 was that of a successful chacarero who owned a mule team, raised livestock, produced wheat, coca, sugar, honey and wine, all of which were ongoing operations at the time of his death. Among his possessions he listed an unspecified number of Indian slaves, possibly Chiriguano. He also listed the African slaves he owned, but in two distinct categories. Five slaves were listed along with the inventory of his houses and rich furnishings, which suggests they served as domestic servants. On the other hand, he declared eight slaves—six men and two women, three of whom were *bozales* (born in Africa) in the inventories of his coca and sugar *chácaras*, and his vineyards, suggesting this latter group were agricultural labor.¹⁸

Further, in 1610 two Mizque residents, Pablo Pérez and Pedro de Velazco entered into a partnership as wine producers. Their land holdings included wheat fields and vineyards where each man had contributed his half of the 19,000 grape bushes planted that year. They also agreed that each would put up half of the 3,500 pesos to go toward the purchase of as many male and female African slaves as the money would buy.¹⁹ This probably came to about seven or eight slaves. At this time African slaves, an extremely expensive commodity, usually cost 500-800 pesos each, and often as much as 1,000 pesos.

Although somewhat later, the 1629 will of chacarero General Bartolomé Cortés further informs the discussion. His operations exceeded those of Menéndez only in size not scope. Among the many possessions and multiple *chácaras* attributed to the General was the “very distant” estancia “Turque” where his sixty-one African slaves resided along with ten *yanacona*. Here, the will significantly reveals the status of *chácara* mulatos. According to the officials and accountants handling the *yanacona* inventory,

The five children of María Yndia shepherdess, wife of el Negro Manuel, shepherd of said estancia, although they are the children of said black slave they are not slaves. Because their mother is a *yanacona* Indian as such they too will be recorded and taxed as *yanacona* of said estancia where they were born and raised and where they still reside with their parents.²⁰

¹⁸ AMCBA-M, vol. 1597-1607, exp. 9.

¹⁹ AMCBA-M, vol. 1610, exp. 30.

²⁰ AMCBA-M, vol. 38, 1629-1676, exp. 8.

In another document, Antón Negro *ladino* (hispanicized African) received a warning to mend his ways (drinking) and to behave responsibly, as expected of all yanacona, toward his *amo* (a term loaded with nuances, to mean anything from master, proprietor, overseer, or lord).²¹ Clearly, humanitarianism was not a primary crown concern. Instead, control of the African yanacona, like his Indian counterpart, served royal interests handily, at 2 pesos annually, for each able bodied individual.

In further support of a significant African presence, it should be noted that in the late 1670s the enterprising Jesuits found their way into Mizque's more tropical niches, where among other things, they would produce sugar and wine. At the time of their expulsion in 1767, one of their holdings called the *Ranchería de los Negros* claimed 107 slaves—men, women, and children. Another holding, the hacienda Chalquani, had a working crew of 24 adult male slaves. According to Alberto Crespo, slave prices remained exceptionally high in the Charcas region because of its relative geographic inaccessibility. Further, he notes that throughout the entire colonial period, able bodied, unskilled adult slaves sold at about 500 pesos—the men costing somewhat less, the women a bit more. The more skilled the slave, the higher his or her price. Crespo cites one particular example of a slave highly skilled in sugar processing, who was valued at 1,500 pesos.²² Clearly, the Jesuits had a considerable investment in their Mizque operations. How many yanacona worked on the Jesuit properties cannot be ascertained from these inventories. Whether padrones of these Jesuit holdings exist has yet to be determined.

Apart from agricultural activities, African slaves also appear in Mizque notarial transactions as domestic servants. Many of the wills and dowries include reference to at least one or two slaves. As in the bills of sale, the slaves are described as “de casa” or “de servidumbre.” Here again, not surprisingly, late 16th century Mizque merely reflected colony-wide patterns; even modestly prominent households claimed ownership of African or mulato slaves.

Mizque clearly benefited from the African component in its labor activities. In his report to the Viceroy in 1618, the Bishop of the Mizque-Santa Cruz diocese, Antonius de la Barranca, wrote on the state of the nine parishes under his jurisdiction, measuring their material condition by

²¹ AMCBA-M, vol. 1597-1607, exp. 18.

²² Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, Colección de Mizque/Jesuitas, fs. 195-280. See Alberto Crespo R., *Esclavos negros in Bolivia* (La Paz: Litografías e Imprentas Unidas, S.A., 1977) pp. 65-68. My own findings for the Mizque region support Crespo's figures.

whether or not they could afford African slaves for church-related activities. He noted that Mizque's parish not only had African slaves, but also enjoyed sound economic support from its parishioners, and *cofradías* (lay brotherhoods) in which everyone, "asi de espanoles como de indios y negros" all participated.²³ The African presence—slave and free—had become an irrefutable fact.

Just as African participation, involuntary or otherwise, was the historical reality in Mizque and in the colony at large, a concurrent reality also emerged. Africans in the Andes and their descendants, like their counterparts elsewhere, as Restall's article in this issue underscores, resisted enslavement. Whatever slave codes, decrees, and ordinances applied to New Spain pertained equally to the Viceroyalty of Peru. Certainly viceroys Mendoza and Toledo brought to Peru their many years of experience dealing with African resistance in Mexico. Not surprisingly, early on, we hear a familiar refrain in the royal decree issued out of Valencia, Spain, January 6, 1586 by King Phillip II to

The President and Magistrates of My Royal Audiencia [of La Plata] in the Province of Charcas . . . I have been informed that in those provinces there are many negros, mulatos and mestizos and people of mixtures and every day their numbers continue to grow, and many of them are *huidos*, have no idea who their fathers are . . . growing up with great vices and liberty, out of work . . . eating and drinking beyond control, mixing with the Indians, indulging in drink and witchcraft, not attending mass nor hearing sermons they know nothing of the holy Catholic faith, and if things continue this way great harm and inconvenience will arise . . . look into this matter and see that these damages be avoided and that these peoples be christianized and taught skills and do not mingle with the Indians, as I have ordered in earlier rulings.²⁴

Indeed, resistance to the above and similar rulings, and to the many ordinances and codes implemented to control the castas and the slaves persisted throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru. Nevertheless, defiance endured the entire 300 years of colonial rule and after. Earlier studies underscore *cimarrón* or runaway slave activities in the Lima region very early on.²⁵ We now know

²³ Archivo General de Indias, Charcas, 135, 6 fs. Father Mauricio Valcanover, of the Franciscan order in Cochabamba who has conducted ongoing research on the history of the Franciscans in South America, very generously shared with me this and other data he obtained while doing research in Spain.

²⁴ This decree is cited in Max Portugal Ortíz, *La esclavitud negra in las épocas colonial y nacional de Bolivia* (La Paz: Instituto Boliviano de Cultura, 1977) p. 22.

²⁵ For earlier works which focus on the Lima and coastal regions, see Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, pp. 171-198, Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, and Nicholas P. Cushner, *Lords of the Land: Sugar, Wine, and Jesuit Estates of Coastal Peru, 1600-1767* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980) pp. 81-112. Investigations which look beyond the coast and into the Andean highlands

that the tradition of active resistance continued into the Republic of Peru.²⁶

In the highland audiencia of Charcas, as early as 1548, local authorities in the city of La Paz had already implemented slave ordinances. One in particular forbade “negros, slave or free, to sell any meat whatever on penalty of 100 lashes and loss of said meat. Or in place of lashes, a payment of 10 pesos as punishment, two-thirds of which was to go to public works, one-third to the informer. . . .” This same ordinance also declared it illegal for “negras” (black women) to hoard bread.²⁷ By the 1560s, La Plata, the seat of the audiencia, also had strict codes in place. Authorities there, too, were fearful of the “free negros and mulatos, so many of them and their kind increasing by the day that soon they will be roving bands, assaulting and robbing or they will join with the Indians and cause them to rise up. . . .” By 1573, they were “prohibited from carrying arms, having horses, congregating in groups, or mixing with Indians. . . .”²⁸

Complaints of cimarrones emerged not only in La Paz and La Plata, but also in Oruro, and the silver mining center of Potosí, 13,253 feet above sea level. The royal mint in Potosí, known as the Casa de la Moneda, also used slave labor. The Casa also bore witness to a number of violent tumults among the slaves held captive there, often resulting in serious injuries among the slave population.²⁹

The problem of runaways continued unabated in the highlands. In 1601, after receiving his orders from Spain, Viceroy Mendoza directed another proviso to the Audiencia of La Plata. In it, he focused on the need to halt the cimarrón problem in that region. “. . . [The cimarrones] live in the mountains and along the roads . . . attacking merchants and travelers, stealing all of their possessions, and killing many.”³⁰ The viceroy clearly saw this as an acute problem and ordered travelers not to set forth unless they traveled in groups of twenty and more.³¹ The following underscores how seriously royal authorities perceived the problem:

The absence of a slave from his master’s house for more than 4 days will result in a punishment of 50 lashes, after which the captive will be placed in

include Portugal Ortíz, *La esclavitud negra*; Crespo, *Esclavos*; and Eugenia Bridikhina, *La mujer negra en Bolivia* (La Paz: Ministro del Desarrollo Humano, 1995).

²⁶ See Peter Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition in Early Republican Peru* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992) 48-50. Here, Blanchard discusses the fear experienced by both government officials and slavocrats when faced with a rebellious, independence-minded *and* (emphasis mine) armed slaves.

²⁷ Portugal Ortíz, *La esclavitud negra*, p. 45.

²⁸ Crespo, *Esclavos negros*, p. 117.

²⁹ Portugal Ortíz, *La esclavitud negra*, pp. 59, 60-61, 70-73.

³⁰ Crespo, *Esclavos negros*, p. 97.

³¹ *Ibid.*

stocks for public exhibit . . . if absent for more than 8 days he will receive 100 lashes and wear a 12 lb. leg iron.³²

An absence of over two months was punishable by hanging.³³ These harsh laws notwithstanding, slaves continually ran away and cimarrón activity persisted in defying the social order. Not surprisingly, women also participated in fugitive actions, either independently or in groups, and as often as not, suffered the consequences when caught.³⁴ One cautionary note: while other investigations demonstrate actual application of even harsher slave codes than those cited here (please see Herrera and Lane in this issue), I have yet to come across any evidence of such enforcement in my investigations. However, this does not necessarily mean slaves were not subjected to cruel and inhumane punishment.

Within the context of the above revisionism, Mizque serves a double function in the present discussion. First, the African diaspora cast a far more extended net in the Andean world than previously held. And second, here, as elsewhere, slavery was synonymous with resistance. Even from this “remote” jurisdiction, solid documentation emerges to underscore an African assertion and agency. In the Mizque documents, two now familiar orders re-surface dated July 5 and July 15, 1605, this time in reference to the Indian community of Pocona, a Mizque community and region with a long history of coca production. The Indian caciques were to take inventory within eight days of all the “negros, mulatos y mestizos” living and fraternizing among the Indians. The inventories were to state cases of “maltreatment.” All were to be expelled in accordance with royal decree.³⁵

As noted above, others have already established a clear and tangible fear among royal officials and private parties over the roving bands of cimarrones in the Lima, La Paz, La Plata, and other highland regions. We now know that cimarrones also roamed the Mizque area. In 1633, the municipal government of Mizque appealed to the higher courts not to pardon the negro named Amador, head of a small band of cimarrones operating in the Valley of Mizque. The local officials, backed by local clergy, claimed the cimarrón leader did not deserve to be pardoned. They said that he and his followers continued to cause very serious problems, “to the excess,” and had been doing so for a prolonged period of time. For the safety of all local residents, the appeal continued, every attempt should be made to capture Amador as

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Bridikhina, *La mujer negra*, pp. 40-42.

³⁵ AMCBA-M, vol. 1605-1607, exp. 22.

well as his followers. If they could not be apprehended immediately, then their food and supply lines should be cut. If this action did not force them into submission, it would at least cause them to disband. The intent was for Amador to turn himself in, serve time in the local jail, and perform the obligatory work-related prison chores. There would be no compromise or pre-arranged settlements. The municipal government of Mizque requested sole authority over Amador's imprisonment as well as the terms of his release.³⁶

Cases of individual cimarrones figure even more predominantly in the documents. And here the documents themselves call for a brief explanation. These are not the estate-related sources discussed earlier. Much of the support data for this discussion, instead come from court cases pertaining to the Audiencia de Charcas, the administrative center of which was located in La Plata. This center, like those of Lima and Mexico City, also served as the highest court of appeals in regional disputes. Thus, cases that could not be satisfactorily resolved at the local level—be it Mizque, La Paz, etc.—were sent up to La Plata for a second appeal. To process a lawsuit at the local level cost a goodly sum in court costs, notarial fees, and so on. To persevere and continue the litigation at the higher level could become extremely expensive. That an owner was willing to risk considerable money and time—some of the cases I studied moved quite slowly—to claim and recapture his or her cimarrón, suggests the economic importance of the issue.³⁷

Looking first to litigations over runaways at the local level, one particular lawsuit merits closer scrutiny. It is somewhat complicated, but only in that the many twists and turns the case takes expose the vested interests of several parties, not to mention the destiny of the cimarrón himself. The case—don Diego de Venegas vs. Sebastián de la Vega—opened November 24, 1650 and lasted until August 1, 1651. Briefly, don Diego de Venegas, a nobleman living in La Plata, sued Sebastián de la Vega, a rancher and wine producer in Mizque, for the return of his slave. The slave, Josep, had fled the Venegas household seven years earlier. Josep was now 25 years old. Only recently had don Diego located his runaway, now working in de la Vega's vineyards as captain and overseer. Don Diego demanded that the slave, rightfully his, be

³⁶ Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, Audiencia de Charcas: Correspondencia, Lima 1633/ix/1 (hereinafter cited as ANB-CHARCAS, CORR).

³⁷ Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, Archivo de Mizque, 1651, no. 1; 1613, no. 16; 1619, no. 3, 1619, no. 5; 1674, no. 4 (hereinafter cited as ANB-M). These cases are a sampling of what is in the Mizque Collection housed in the National Archives. The ANB is also the repository for most audiencia business including court litigations. I also examined dozens of other cases originating in the regions mentioned earlier in the text: La Paz, La Plata, Potosí, Oruro, Tarija, etc., some of which are also cited in Portugal Ortíz, Crespo, and Bridikhina. All cases adhere to the same standard in terms of form, content, language, and procedure.

returned immediately. He had the necessary papers to prove that Josep was born to his slaves Magdalena and Francisco, under his roof.³⁸

In Mizque, however, de la Vega had another story. He claimed that Josep was one of five slaves included in the ranch and vineyards he purchased two years earlier. In that time, he had trained Josep, who by now was known for his skills and supervisory abilities. The slave was indispensable in hacienda operations and was responsible for its successful harvests. This highly valued slave would be very difficult to replace.³⁹

The truth, not surprisingly, lay somewhere in between the arguments of both camps. Don Diego, it seems, had included Josep and some landed properties in the dowry he drew up for his daughter, who married one Bartolomé de la Fresnada, from Mizque. Apparently de la Fresnada was something of a no-account. He squandered the daughter's dowry by selling off many of her properties and then abandoned her and their child. One of the sales included a vineyard and the slave Josep to Alonso Gonzáles Camorano. Gonzáles Camorano, in turn, sold the same property and slave to de la Vega in 1649 who was now being challenged by don Diego.⁴⁰

In the meantime, what about Josep? His owner don Diego claimed the slave had been "huido" for seven years. Obviously he was not aware that Joseph had been sold in a transaction over which the slave either had no control or desire to control. There are, after all, a number of time gaps in the court statements in which Josep is not accounted for, and he could have easily been fugitive. Once he was re-located by don Diego's family and the litigation over ownership commenced, Josep did indeed flee de la Vega's properties. Under de la Vega's "ownership," Josep fared reasonably well in a position of considerable authority. We also know that he had married a mestiza and thus probably had local ties (he was an unmarried youth when he "fled" don Diego's house on La Plata). Don Diego now wanted Josep returned to La Plata where he would serve out his days as the owner originally intended when he included the slave in his daughter's dowry—as an economic buffer in time of need. The time had come. Josep was to be brought back to La Plata (no mention of the mestiza wife). Don Diego would pay the required 25 pesos for someone to accompany the slave on the return journey. Installed again in La Plata, Josep would be hired out for the usual

³⁸ ANB-M, 1651, no. 1, fs. 3-28. This case, actually covering some 50 detailed pages is relatively brief. Other court cases involving runaways and other forms of slave resistance can run much longer. The documents relating to a specific case are numerous and often chronologically scrambled, making it something of an organizational challenge for the researcher.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

four reales a day paid to day labor (slave or free) in order to support don Diego's deserted daughter and her child.⁴¹ Little wonder that Josep took off as soon as the proceedings got under way.

The slave's taste of freedom was short-lived. De la Vega was not about to lose this one, whose value he now placed at 1,000 pesos—a very hefty sum by any standard, when the going price for able-bodied African slaves ranged from 500-800 pesos depending on skills. He took off immediately upon learning that Josep had fled and eventually tracked the slave down in the Villa of Mizque several days later and returned him to the hacienda. At this juncture the accounts diverge. De la Vega claimed that Venegas's people forced their way on to his property and illegally removed the slave, while the other side claimed that the slave was removed by mutual agreement. Either way, Josep ended up in what is called *depósito*, a state of custody or protection not to be confused with incarceration or punitive action, and remained there until the case was resolved.

Meanwhile, as the litigations drew to a close and Venegas's ownership was established, de la Vega entered his own demands. He insisted on reimbursement on two counts. First he wanted 1,000 pesos from Venegas in "reparation," since he had in good faith purchased the slave under false conditions. Although he had paid 600 pesos for Josep, under his guidance the slave had developed highly marketable skills and was easily worth the additional 400 pesos. Further, because of Josep's *depósito* status, de la Vega also demanded compensation in the standard four reales a day for the 200 days Josep could not be on the job. On August 1, 1651, the court handed down its decision: Josep was to be returned to Venegas in La Plata. Venegas, in turn, was to pay de la Vega 600 pesos in reimbursement for purchase of a slave under false pretenses.⁴²

Given the above economic incentives fueling the energy and determination of owners to recapture their runaways, those same runaways deserve applause and respect for *their* energy and determination to resist and reject their involuntary condition of enslavement.

In a later, incomplete and less detailed local case, the economic significance emerges from yet another perspective. On December 5, 1671, don Matías Sáenz de Soto took Alfonso Cabrillo to court. Apparently 11 years earlier, three of don Matías' slaves fled his "house and hacienda." One slave, Salvador de la Cruz, got as far as the Tomina frontier, a considerable dis-

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

tance to a then extremely remote region (please see the map). In Tomina, he was taken in and kept hidden by Cabrillo for “a long time.” Don Matías eventually learned of his slave’s whereabouts and set in motion procedures for his recapture. When Cabrillo learned that the slave was being sought, he “maliciously and knowingly” sold the slave to a traveling merchant from Lima. While the search to track Salvador continued, the court ordered Cabrillo to pay don Matías the slave’s ascribed working value of four reales a day for the entire time spent in hiding. Should Cabrillo not have the cash to meet this order, his goods and properties would be confiscated and used to reimburse don Matías.⁴³ It should be noted that four reales is one half a peso. If Cabrillo kept the runaway Salvador the entire 11 years, his fines would have amounted to about 8,000 pesos. Given the higher cost of African slaves in the Mizque region discussed earlier, this sum was equivalent to the cost of eight to twelve or more able bodied, skilled and unskilled male and female slaves. Also, nowhere in the above and other court cases I have examined has there been any mention of the harsh punishments specified in the slave codes, for the cited runaways nor the people who harbored them.

Still another perspective on cimarrones surfaces in the Mizque documents. On April 30, 1619, Antonio Corso went to court and accused Francisco de Tordoya, muleteer, of stealing his slave, Francisco. As the case unravels and several testimonies are taken into account (witnesses included several African slaves, Indian workers, and even a couple of landowners), the case becomes more complicated than would first appear. Apparently two slaves (one of them further identified as Congolese) belonging to muleteer Tordoya approached Corso’s slave Francisco (also identified as Congolese) and persuaded him to join them and their owner Tordoya. They were driving a mule team (which included horses, freight, and supplies) down to Santa Cruz. They told Francisco that he would find Tordoya a decent chap to work for, and he would surely find a much better life for himself in that distant, burgeoning frontier. It should be noted that the journey to Santa Cruz was a major undertaking, in which travelers moved through a number of ecological zones including some rather treacherous mountains (author speaks from experience!), dense cloud forests, and tropical rain forests. Few bridges existed and fording the many rivers posed considerable danger. The trip took several weeks.⁴⁴

Tordoya’s men returned for Francisco the following day and took him to Tordoya, who was gearing up for the trek. According to witnesses, Tordoya

⁴³ ANB-M, 1674, #4, 5fs.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1619, #5, 10 fs. For a detailed explanation of Mizque trade and transport routes, see my own article cited above, Brockington, “La dinámica de la historia regional.”

found a place in the pack team for the slave, and said in so many words not to worry “just say I bought you for 600 pesos.” Which is exactly what they did, as they made their slow journey out of the Valley of Mizque and up through the mountains. Antonio Corso, upon taking his case to court, did not lack witnesses. Not only were these mule teams highly visible, they also were dependent on the local population for subsistence, supplies, rations, and the like. Further, Francisco was known and apparently well liked. A number of witnesses recalled their astonishment at the time, that Corso would even consider selling such a valuable slave for a mere 600 pesos.⁴⁵

We do not know how the case was resolved. By the time it came to court Francisco was long gone, and considering the territory, the possibility of recapture increasingly remote. Corso accused the muleteer Tordoya of stealing. But was his, in reality, an act of theft or was he harboring? The witnesses are unanimous in claiming that Francisco clearly joined the pack team of his own volition. And the obvious ease by which Francisco rode away from one master suggests he might easily walk off from the next. This also raises the possibility that these pack teams that traversed and crisscrossed the entire Viceroyalty from one end to the other served as very convenient vehicles of escape for the cimarrón.

But another more decisive means of making that final break from enslavement is reflected, again, in court litigations. These cases are referred to as *reclamaciones* which translates easily into its legal meaning in English, reclaim: to claim or demand back.⁴⁶ They involve slaves going to court to prove and maintain their freedom, or former slaves suing to end illegal re-enslavement. The Audiencia of Charcas heard dozens of *reclamaciones* from all over the entire region. Although the slave plaintiff was usually placed in depósito during the hearings, some were willing to endure actual incarceration, if necessary, to fight for what was rightfully theirs. Thus, while these slaves may not fall entirely within the traditional category of fugitives, the process was, in Peter Blanchard’s words, “openly confrontational.”⁴⁷ It profoundly and often successfully challenged the entire system. I would also add that the *reclamación* action did indeed possess some fugitive overtones in that the slave, in many cases, had to muster up the courage to walk away from her or his place of involuntary employment and go through the demanding motions of court action.

In the Charcas region, *reclamaciones* appear long before concepts of abo-

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 5th Edition.

⁴⁷ Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition*, p. 97.

lition and independence were articulated. References to these cases emerge as early as the 1580s and appear throughout the entire seventeenth century and beyond. For example, in 1584 there appeared a “reclamo de una negra,” followed in 1592 by a “reclamacion de una negra contra Pedro Martínez.” And later, more specifically, a slave woman Juana Prieto reclaimed her freedom, and a mulatto named Jerónimo demanded his rights. These cases continue through at least the early 1700s.⁴⁸ Further, as stated earlier, these reclamaciones, like the other kinds of litigations also cited earlier, represent those cases *not* resolved in the regional or district courts. How many cases were resolved at the local level throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru about which we know virtually nothing? It can be argued that the reclamaciones, appearing earlier than expected, harkened to something far more deeply ingrained than political independence from colonial rule.

In the Andean world, migration was a recognized characteristic of pre-Columbian cultures before the arrival of the Europeans. The Inca borrowed this tradition from their ancestors, who in turn adopted it from other cultures long before their time. The Inca, in fact, gave it a new twist by forcing people to migrate and colonize newly conquered regions, the consequences of which remain evident even today. With the arrival of the Europeans, as stated earlier, this tradition of movement took on yet another dimension. The Indians quickly learned to use it, as a means of rejecting European control. Thus migration—the act of a people moving from one place to another—adjusted to changing conditions and came to include the movement of small family clusters or even single individuals. While on the one hand migration could be seen as a very effective means of resistance, which it was, that very act of resistance was also one of assertion. No one, but no one, was hindered by the terrain. In this context, the term “huido” that so tenaciously haunts the documents, must take on a far more complex meaning than that of simple “flight.”

Thus, the enslaved African was brought into a system in which the origins of resistance to subjugation dated back thousands of years earlier. As noted elsewhere, courageous slaves who made the decision to become fugitives did so at perilous risks their Indian brothers and sisters did not face. The slave, if caught, could be subject to severe corporal and possibly even capital punishment.⁴⁹ But, as the above cases demonstrate, in Charcas, by the early 1600s, employers did not look too closely at one’s legal status. As stated earlier, I have not yet found documentation to support severe, harsh

⁴⁸ Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, Expedientes de la Audiencia de Charcas, 1584, exp. 1; 1592, exp. 4; 1678, exp. 39; 1680, exp. 30; 1682, exp. 1; 1697, exp. 3197; and 1707, exp. 43 to cite a few.

⁴⁹ Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition*, pp. 96, 103.

punishment. In this particular Andean region, there was *always* a shortage of Indian labor.⁵⁰

In the Spanish American experience, from the Viceroyalty of New Spain to the Viceroyalty of Peru, African slavery was synonymous with fugitive action. Roving bands of cimarrones of all sizes plagued city and countryside alike throughout the colonial period. In Charcas, neither the Indian presence nor the terrain hindered the fugitive bands or the lone escapee. Much to the contrary, long term traditions already in place played into slave resistance. Further, the patterns of legislation and defiance, participation in tumults, the replenishment of a diminishing indigenous labor pool, and the use of acquired skills as a negotiating mechanism all reflect the dynamics of slave resistance. Moreover, the fact that early on slaves used the court system to serve their own needs and take control of their own lives, indicates not only resistance, but another equally dynamic factor—that of agency.

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⁵⁰ The padrones de chacara, cited above, reveal in quantifiable terms the severity of the labor shortage.